



Guidance for Essential Businesses To Mitigate Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace

Stay Home If You Are Sick!

EMPLOYERS SHOULD:

- Maximize telecommuting options for as many employees as possible.
 - Require only essential employees to report physically to the workplace
- Urge employees to stay home when they are sick and maximize flexibility in sick leave benefits
- Consider staggering start and end times to reduce large numbers of people coming together at the same time
- Avoid meetings with more than 10 people. Have 6 feet of distance between attendees
- Consider regular health checks (e.g. temperature and respiratory symptom screening) of staff and visitors entering buildings when possible
- Cancel or postpone large conferences or events

ENHANCED HYGIENE

Everyone needs to follow increased hygiene measures.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, if soap and water are not available
- Avoid close contact with other people
- Avoid touching, your eyes, nose and mouth

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue

REGULAR CLEANING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS

Exposure is thought to mostly occur through respiratory droplets, but surfaces can still transfer the virus from person to person.

- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, tabletops, counter, phone, keyboards, fixture and elevators several times a day
- Placing sanitizing hand rub dispensers in frequently visited places (e.g. front entrances, elevators)
- Displaying posters promoting hand-washing and preventing the spread of illness
- Identify a designated area for employees who become sick at work

STAY HOME IF SICK

- All sick employees should stay home
- Allow for flexible sick leave policies consistent with public health messaging and inform employees of changing sick leave policies
- Don't require sick employees to have doctors' notes as health care offices are likely very busy and unable to provide documentation right away

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Guidance for Essential Businesses with Suspected Exposure to COVID-19

Stay Home If You Are Sick!

- *Employees with confirmed diagnosis or suspected of COVID-19 should stay home and not come to work. For further self-assessment visit [readyharris.org](https://www.readyharris.org)*
- *Employees who are undergoing testing for COVID-19 or have been confirmed with COVID-19 must be isolated until they have been fever free (without the use of fever reducing medication) for 72 hours AND it has been at least 7 days since they first started feeling symptoms*
- *An employee that lives in the same household as a confirmed case of COVID-19 must stay quarantined for 14 days AFTER the confirmed case of COVID-19 in their household has been without fever. Employee should self-monitor and seek medical care if symptoms develop*
- *If an employee suspects close contact directly with a case or someone under investigation for COVID-19, they must quarantine at home for 14 days after their last potential exposure and self-monitor. If symptoms develop, the employee should seek medical care immediately*
 - *A potential exposure could be travel-related, contact to a known COVID-19 case, through a healthcare encounter, or through community interactions.*
 - *Close Contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a person highly suspicious of or confirmed with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time or within direct contact of infectious secretions (being coughed on).*
- *If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).*
- *For facilities that have had persons suspected or confirmed with COVID-19 in the area, close off the areas used until the area can be cleaned and disinfected. See CDC guidance for Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection.*
- *Employers should be sensitive to family needs by preparing for possible increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and their family members, including lack of access to dependent care for children and elderly family members.*
- *In the case of a workplace outbreak, employers should consider suspending operations if a significant number of employees have been in close contact with a confirmed case or have been diagnosed with COVID-19.*
- *Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick to confirm illness or to return to work. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and may not be able to provide such documentation in a timely way.*

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Additional COVID-19 Resources for Essential Businesses

Stay Home If You Are Sick!

DSHS Exposure Risk Categories

<https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/public-health.aspx>

DSHS Discontinuation of Home Isolation Guidance

<https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/public-health.aspx>

DSHS Guidance for Employees and Managers

<https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/docs/DSHS-GuidanceForEmployeesAndManagers.pdf>

Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>

CDC Guidance on Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT:

CALL CENTER INFORMATION RELATED TO COVID-19:

For Harris County Residents:

Harris County Public Health (HCPH)

www.hcphtx.org/COVID-19

www.ReadyHarris.org

832-927-7575 - This number is 9 a.m. - 7 p.m., everyday

Harris Health System

www.harrishealth.org

Ask-My-Nurse

713-634-1110* - This number is 9 a.m. - 7 p.m., everyday clinical-related questions

For City of Houston Residents:

Houston Health Department

www.HoustonHealth.org

www.HoustonEmergency.org

832-393-4220* - This number is staffed 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. M-F, 9 a.m - 3 p.m. on Sat.

For Fort Bend County Residents:

Fort Bend County Health & Human Services

www.fbchealth.org/ncov

281-633-7795 - This number is Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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